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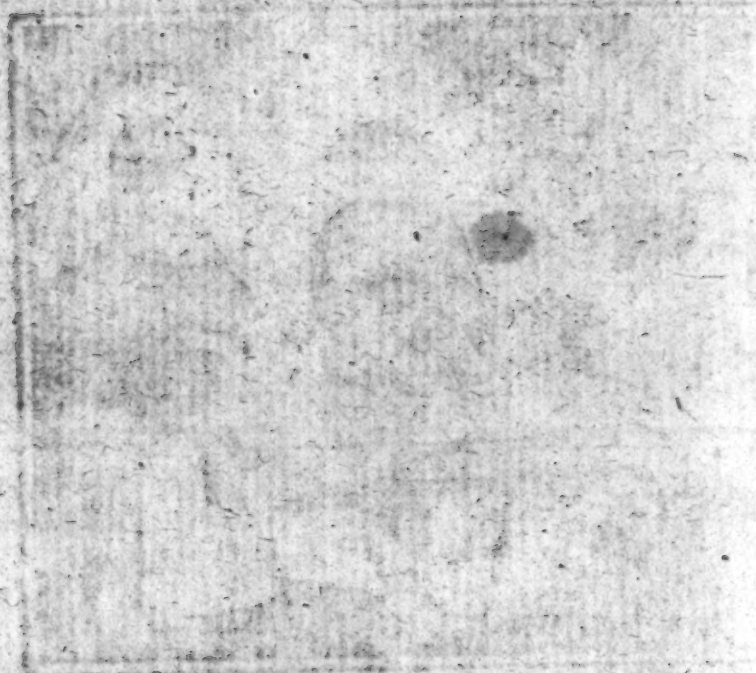
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As he remained in this situation, the storm drew
nearer; the loud rumbling of thunder was
distinctly heard, and a most tremendous cloud ap-
peared to be gathering over his head.

Warned by these signs, he thought it most pro-
per to return home; but he had not proceeded far
before the rain fell with such violence, that he was
obliged to seek shelter in a neighbouring cottage.

The pious Mr. Godard had made himself a rule
to visit all his parishes, and in every house he
visited being well received.

Shropshire Rector, &c.

"O my dear Sir," exclaimed Mrs. Martin, upon
opening the door, "I am glad you are come. My
good man sleeps from seven to eight, and my boy
has been so frightened to be alarmed by the
noise of the storm, that I hope, the worst is
over. It don't fall so strong as it did."

Mr. Godard rested himself by her, and en-
quired by his conversation to refresh his mind.

A MOST sultry day, towards the latter end of
the month of August, being succeeded by a
delightful evening; the worthy Mr. Godard, Rector
of a small parish on the borders of Shropshire, was
tempted to set out on his favourite walk along the
side of a beautiful river. As he rambled on-
ward, the quick flashes of distant lightening caught
his attention, and he rested for some time against
the rails of a little wooden bridge that crossed the
river, the better to observe them.

As

As he remained in this situation the storm drew suddenly nearer; the loud rumbling of thunder was distinctly heard, and a most tremendous cloud appeared to be gathering over his head.

Warned by these signs, he thought it most prudent to return home; but he had not proceeded far before the rain fell with such violence, that he was obliged to seek shelter in a neighbouring cottage.

The pious Mr. Godard had made himself a true father to all his parish, and in every house he was certain of being well received.

"O my dear Sir," exclaimed Mrs. Martin, upon opening the door, "I am glad you are come. My good man sleeps from home to-night, and my poor babes and I have been so frightened to be alone in all the storm! Please God, I hope, the worst is over. It don't flash so strong as it did."

Mr. Godard seated himself by her, and endeavoured by his conversation to restore the poor woman's spirits. When the violence of the storm had by degrees abated, Mrs. Martin told her children they might go to bed; but as it still rained very fast the worthy Rector consented to wait a little longer.

"I hope, your honour, will excuse my little ones saying their prayers," said Mrs. Martin; "I always make it a rule to hear them before they go to stairs." Mr. Godard praised her for the custom and begged he might not interrupt it. The little girl

girls then knelt round their mother, and repeated together, as fast as they could,

“ Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, &c.”

This over they kissed their mother, and ran up to bed.

“ My good Mrs. Martin,” said Mr. Godard, as soon as they were gone; “ I should be sorry to blame any thing that you thought was right; but if I speak my mind freely, I must say, that I see great objections to the prayer your children have now been saying.”

“ Dear Sir how so? I always thought it was a very fine form of words.”

Mr. Godard. The words of a prayer, my good friend, I take to be of less consequence than the meaning of it. When we kneel down to pray, we should consider that we are speaking to the Great God of Heaven and Earth; and surely then, for decency's sake, we should avoid saying words that have no sense in them; which I fancy we shall find to be the case with the prayer we are speaking of.

Mrs. Martin. Surely Sir, there is great meaning in those words. Don't they beg God to bless one, and speak of the Angels, and the Saints, and Evangelists?

Mr. Godard. With regard to the Angels, and Saints,

Saints, you must remember, Mrs. Martin, that we are no where in Scripture commanded to pray to them. On the contrary it is said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him *only* shalt thou serve." So that if I supposed that in this prayer the children were really speaking to Angels, I should highly disapprove of it on that account. Besides, what notions can a child form of four Angels, that stand round the bed, with candles in their hands, that they may read and write? It is not *truth*; for there are in reality no such doings.

Mrs. Martin. But then it speaks of Matthew and Mark; and they were good men you must needs own.

Mr. Godard. Certainly they were good, and as they wrote the books that give us the account of our Saviour, I reckon them among the most useful characters that ever lived. But what has a child to do with their names when he ought to be praying to his Maker. Neither Matthew nor Mark made him; nor can Luke nor John preserve him.

Mrs. Martin. Very true your honour; and I should not like the prayer if it only spoke of *them*; but it begs God's blessing, you know, in the second line.

Mr. Godard. Yes, upon the bed you lie on; but that is a strange way of asking God's protection for yourself. Prayer, my good woman, is one of the most necessary, and also one of the most useful duties.

ies we have to perform. In order, however, to our finding any advantage from it we must pray properly. If you wanted to ask your landlord to forgive you your rent, and to let you continue to live in his house, you would not begin by running over the names of the people that live in the parish, supposing them to be ever so good. You would be afraid, if you talked in that way he would take you to be drunk. And shall we then dare to speak to God in a manner we should count disrespectful if used to one of our fellow creatures? Shall we, when we come before him, to ask his pardon for our faults, and his merciful care of us, affront his glorious Majesty by words that have no meaning?

Mrs. Martin. La! Sir, you quite frighten me. I am sure I meant no harm. I never could have thought there was so much harm in those words.

Mr. Godard. Do not be distressed by what I have said. Our God is greater than the landlord; and as he sees your heart, he knows, that though the words of the prayer had no meaning, you did not repeat them yourself, or teach them to your children, with a wish to dishonour him.

Mrs. Martin. No, that's true enough. I never had such a thought.

Mr. Godard. May I hope then you are convinced by what I have been saying?

Mrs.

Mrs. Martin. O yes, it is all *very fine*. But I don't know what to do about it more than the dead. My children are too young for *Our Father*, and I never heard of any other prayer besides.

Mr. Godard. If that is all your difficulty I will soon find you a proper prayer for them. And now Mrs. Martin, will you forgive me, if I enquire what prayers you and your husband make use of. I do not mean to be impertinent, but perhaps I may be able to assist you in that respect also.

Mrs. Martin. Why, as to my good man, the truth is, that he comes home of a night so tired that he is glad to go to-bed, and I really believe he falls asleep without often thinking of any one thing. And then of a morning, you know, he must needs have no time for praying. For my own part, I commonly make it a rule to say the *Lord's prayer* and "I believe" to myself, when I get to-bed; though I confess, that after a hard day's work I am sometimes apt to forget it.

Mr. Godard. I am sorry to hear you say so. Surely you can never have seen the matter in its proper light. Consider what would become of us if we were forsaken by God Almighty. Our health, our senses, our limbs, were given by his bounty, and we cannot preserve them an instant without his care. On him we likewise depend for our daily bread, for the sleep that refreshes us at night, and for all that can render life comfortable and happy. Should it not then be our constant

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are to beg the favour of God, to entreat him to continue to us what blessings we have, and to give us those that we are in want of?

Mrs. Martin. Ah, sure enough it would be a sad thing if we were forsaken of the Lord. I often think what would become of us if it was not for his goodness.

Mr. Godard. We should all be badly off, no doubt; For besides what I have been speaking of, the happiness of our immortal souls depends upon him. In this world, *Mrs. Martin*, we cannot live long; so that whether we enjoy ourselves or not, it is of no such mighty consequence, but in the world to come where we shall abide for ever, it will be important indeed for us to have made friends with God. Now how shall we do this, but by begging him to forgive our past sins, and to give us grace to avoid committing others for the time to come; and as we are apt to do wrong, one way or another every day, shall we think it too much if every morning we desire him to preserve us from evil, and we beg his pardon every night for all the faults we have committed?

Mrs. Martin. Indeed, Sir, what you say is all very just; and, to speak the truth, I never do feel comfortable when I come to think of it, if I find I have not said my prayers. But I fear I shall have a hard task to persuade my husband to be of my aid. Poor man, he is so sleepy!

Mr.

Mr. Godard. It would be a better plan if your husband and you would make it a point to repeat your prayers before you go to bed. You should not put off your duty to God till you grow too sleepy to attend to it. At any time our minds are too apt to wander from what we are saying, but we do not give them a fair chance if we only begin when we are laid down to rest. Kneeling is an humble posture; and as we do not very often place ourselves in it, besides there is something respectful in doing so when we address our Maker.

"You must try and persuade your husband, my good friend, to be more regular in his prayers. Remind him that we poor mortals never know when we shall die. Each night that we lie down in our beds there is a chance that we may never wake in this world; and what a sad thing would it be for us, if we had not made our peace with God!"

Mrs. Martin. Well, Sir, I'll tell John what you say; and very likely I may be able to bring him round; for he is a good soul.

Mr. Godard. Do so my good woman. I will call to-morrow and bring you a little book of prayers that I think you will find very suitable. The Belief that you told me you said every night (or what is commonly called the Creed,) is not properly a *prayer*. It is a most excellent form of words for letting us know what christians are bound to *believe*: but it does not ask any favour of God nor does it praise him for his mercies. With regard to the Lord's prayer though I recommend you

use it every day, yet I think it rather too short
itself to form the whole of your worship.

Since you have never been used to family prayers,
Mrs. Martin, what think you of asking your husband
to join with you for the time to come in serving
our God; and when your nephew is at home he
may be of the party, as may any one else who hap-
pens to be in your house.

Mrs. Martin. When I was at service, before I
married, my Master used to have us all up of an
evening to prayers. But, la! I never heard of
such a thing for us poor folk.

Mr. Godard. Do not let that thought prevent
you from doing your duty, I beseech you. Though
you be ever so poor you have as much a soul to
be saved as your betters; and God will listen to the
prayers that are devoutly offered up in a cottage,
as much as if they came from a Palace. The poor
have mercies to be thankful for as well as the rich;
and if they are in distress they still more seem to stand
in need of comfort from Heaven. Let me persuade
you then never to let a night or a morning pass
without having sought the Lord.

Mrs. Martin. Oh, Sir! I cannot promise for the
morning. If you knew how hurried we are you
could not expect it.

Mr. Godard. Could you make that excuse to
the Almighty? Could you seriously tell him, that
of

of a morning you never have time to thank him for his care of you, and to beg his protection?

Mrs. Martin coloured, and Mr. Godard thus proceeded. "One day Mrs. Martin, both you and your husband must give an account of all your actions to God. Do not therefore deceive yourselves by making any excuses *now* that will not stand good at that awful time. The prayers I mean to give you would not certainly take up five minutes; and surely *five minutes* to be spared from your beds, or from your worldly business, in order to forward your everlasting salvation, you cannot think a sacrifice of too much time or trouble."

Mrs. Martin. Well, Sir, we'll see what can be done. But I am afraid we cannot have family prayer; for as ill luck will have it, my poor master can't read.

Mr. Godard. It is certainly a misfortune for any one not to be able to read; but as you know how, my good friend, that need not be any objection to your praying together. I should like best that the husband should be the reader; but if that cannot be the case, the wife, the son, the daughter, any one would do as well; and, indeed, it seems more necessary to pray together when part of the family are unable to read by themselves.

One thing more, "continued Mr. Godard, after a pause, let me say before I take my leave. Besides the daily prayers I have so long been recommending, I would earnestly advise you to accustom
you

your mind very frequently to make short prayers
 on occasion requires; not in settled words, but just
 what you happen to think of at the time.

Mrs. Martin. Dear Sir, would it not be very
 presumptuous in a poor ignorant woman like me to
 speak to God in her own words, as I may say?

Mr. Godard. Not in the least my friend. God,
 as I said before, regards the *heart*, more than the
 words of his worshippers; and if you make known
 to him your wants, as you feel them at the time,
 you will find it a greater relief than any thing that
 you can conceive. I do not think I should have
 seen you this evening in so terrible a fright if you
 had used yourself to consider the constant presence
 of God. You rejoiced that I came to you in the
 storm; yet what could I do? But that Being who was
 already with you was able to protect you from
 every bad effect of it.

Mr. Godard here looked at his watch, and find-
 ing it late said that notwithstanding the rain he
 must think of returning home. "Consider what I
 have been saying Good by" said he, "cordially shaking
 Mrs. Martin by the hand;" "and, believe me, it will
 be for your happiness to take my advice. You
 must not suppose that *praying* is all that is requir-
 ed of us; but no one can be truly good without it;
 nor is there any way so likely to keep us in the
 right path. It will be far more difficult for
 the man to bring himself to act wickedly, who
 has just been addressing his God, and owning his
 dependence

dependance upon him, than for him who lives
the neglect of his religious duties. And no
Good-night to you. Mind you persuade your
husband to unite with you in what I have recom-
mended, and God Almighty bless you."

The book of prayers that Mr. Godard gave Mrs. Martin will be the Sunday Reading for next Month.



A LIST of TRACTS.

HISTORIES.

DELAYS are Dangerous.

The Affectionate Orphans.

The Wreck.

The Wife Reformed.

Betty Gillis.

Jeremiah Wilkins.

Friendly Advice.

The Murder in the Wood.

The Good Step-Mother.

Never fly from your Duty.

Madge Blarney.

The Two Cousins.

The Honest Publican.

SUNDAY READINGS.

The Widow of Zerephath.

Ananias and Sapphira.

The History of Samson.

The History of St. Peter the Apostle.

The Sower. A Parable.

The Unfruitful Fig-Tree.

Eli, the High Priest.

David the Chosen of God.

John the Baptlst.

Prophecies relating to Jesus Christ.

Sacred Biography. Part I. II.

Reflections on the Victory off the Nile.

POETRY.

W. R. A. P. O. E. T. R. Y. A.

Richard and Rebecca.
The Good Aunt.
The Wanderer.
The Fatal Choice.
Easter Monday.
Mistaken Evil.
The Distressed Mother.
Elisha, &c.
Jack Flint the Soldier. Parts I. II. III. IV.
True Happiness.

SUNDAY READINGS.

Widow of Zorobababel.
Sower. A Parable.
Unfruitful Fig-Tree.
The High Priest.
The Chosen of God.
The Baptist.
Parables relating to Jesus Christ.
Part I. II.
The Victory of the Nile.

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